



**LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY**  
**LOUISVILLE METRO BOARD OF HEALTH**

GREG FISCHER  
MAYOR

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BOARD CHAIRPERSON

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The Louisville Metro Board of Health strongly opposes any effort to weaken Louisville's comprehensive smoke-free ordinance, including the recently proposed exemption for cigar bars. Louisville residents have chosen clean air and better health outcomes each time tobacco ordinances have been considered in the last decade, as have other cities and states where this exemption has been proposed. Weakening common sense, evidence-based respiratory protections in the midst of a pandemic which more seriously impacts those with respiratory issues would be irresponsible.

We know that there is no safe level of exposure to cigar smoke, which contains higher levels of cancer-causing substances and tar than cigarette smoke. Further, according to the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, there is no method or system that can make indoor smoking safe through ventilation. Cigar bar employees would be unable to avoid exposure to an unsafe work environment. Considering that cigar bar employees, on average, earn wages which are below Kentucky's poverty line, this represents a health equity issue.

In addition to staff employed by the bar directly, the health of delivery drivers, letter carriers, inspectors, contractors, and other workers would also be negatively impacted by workplace exposure to cigar smoke. This threatens equal protections for all and could result in costly lawsuits against the City. This would also increase Kentucky's smoking-related health care spending, which already totals \$1.92 billion.

While there is no evidence that cigar bars have a positive economic impact on the community, there is overwhelming evidence that comprehensive smoke-free laws save lives. In considering this exemption, we must once again choose better health outcomes for our community by maintaining our strong, comprehensive smoke-free ordinance.

Heidi Margulis  
Chair, Louisville Metro Board of Health